United Nations A/C.5/52/42

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 March 1998

Original: English

Fifty-second session
Fifth Committee
Agenda item 116
Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Relationship between the treatment of perennial activities in the programme budget and the use of the contingency fund

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly in its resolution 44/201 B of 21 December 1989 decided that additional requirements for those new mandates emanating from decisions of the Economic and Social Council which were outside the scope of the perennial activities included in section 23 (Human rights) of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991[1] were to be treated in accordance with the provisions for the use and operation of the contingency fund, and requested the Secretary-General to include the question of the relationship between the treatment of perennial activities in the programme budget and the use of the contingency fund in the report that he was to prepare in the light of the experience gained with regard to the contingency fund during the implementation of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. In part III of its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, the Assembly regretted that the report had not yet been submitted to it and requested the Secretary-General to present that report to the Assembly at its resumed fifty-second session.

2. With the adoption of resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, the General Assembly decided that the programme budget shall include expenditures related to political activities of a "perennial" nature whose mandates are renewed annually. It also decided that the programme budget shall include a contingency fund to accommodate additional expenditures relating to the biennium derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Consequently the proposed programme budget for 1988-1989 included provision for "perennial activities" which related to political affairs and public information, the bulk of which was for activities related to Namibia, to human rights and to the related conference services. Paragraph 24 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[2] on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 (A/42/6) provides a breakdown of the resources concerned. Prior to that biennium, such activities were considered as non-recurrent and the resources approved for them in one biennium were not carried over to the next in the proposed programme budget. Instead, as and when the mandates were renewed for those activities, statements of programme budget implications would be issued and additional resources sought.

3. In resolution 41/213 the General Assembly clearly defined the relationship between "perennial" activities and the use of the contingency fund. Provision for activities whose mandates are being renewed on an annual basis were to be included in the proposed programme budget. The use of the contingency fund would be for new mandates that would arise subsequent to the preparation of the proposed programme budget. This practice has been followed since the 1988-1989 biennium.

4. In the case of human rights activities, each year since the mid-1970s, a number of activities have been undertaken in response to decisions of the Commission on Human Rights as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council. Initially, no provisions were made available for those activities in the proposed programme budget and every year when the Economic and Social Council adopted mandates, statements of programme budget implications would be issued and the resources needed to implement the mandates were then sought, principally under the terms of the resolution on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium concerned.

5. In the 1986-1987 programme budget a new procedure was established, following consultations with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, whereby provisions were made in the proposed programme budget for such activities based on past experience.

6. These activities mandated by the Economic and Social Council and financed as explained above fell within the concept of "perennial" activities and provisions were therefore proposed for them in the 1988-1989 programme budget in line with resolution 41/213 and were approved by the General Assembly. These activities relate to special rapporteurs and other fact-finding and investigative bodies established periodically pursuant to resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council. Country rapporteurs are appointed and/or extended on an annual basis. The thematic rapporteurs and working groups are established for three years. As can be seen from the annex to the present report, the number of such mandates recurs with regularity year after year.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/44/6/Rev.1). The relevant section of the 1998-1999 programme budget (ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/52/6/Rev.1)) is section 22.

[2] Ibid., *Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/42/7).

Annex

Activities financed under mandates of the Economic and Social Council

Year	Special rapporteurs (country)	Special rapporteurs (thematic)	Mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General	Working groups/ experts	Other (field missions) (1503 procedure)	Annual total
1986	6	3	6	7	3	25
1987	6	4	7	7	3	27
1988	7	3	10	7	2	29
1989	8	1	9	8	1	27
1990	7	4	14	9	1	35
1991	10	5	14	9	1	39
1992	10	7	23	6	3	49
1993	14	5	24	8		51
1994	15	1	27	9	1	53
1995	15	8	27	11	3	64
1996	16	8	18	12		54
1997	16	8	30	12	1	67